

A perfect match by Jancys_Blue_Bayou

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Summary:

He's sleeping, connected to an IV. She pulls up a chair and sits down by the bed, taking Jonathan's left hand in both of hers. He looks... so tired. How couldn't she notice that something was wrong? More wrong than just a cold, or the flu? She turns his hand up and looks at the scar across his palm. Runs her fingers over it and relives three intense years in five seconds. Everything they've gone through. Everything they've done. The two of them, together. Always. They're a team. She grasps his hand again, lining up their scars and presses a kiss to his knuckles. Together, through everything. He'd do anything for her. He has done everything for her. She'll do anything for him.

A perfect match

Author's Note:

For day 3 of Jancy Fanfic Week, which is themed around Family, I give you this weird long thing. It's angsty but with a fluffy ending, I promise. I have no idea what this is, it's a weird idea that was inspired by some different IRL stuff. Also it's probably completely riddled with medical inaccuracies but I claim artistic license with all.

Nancy was two weeks into her second year of college and so far it had been everything she had wished for, and more. It was her out of Hawkins, away from the crushing smallness of the town filled with memories of her dead best friend, suffocating parents and demonic monsters. New York City had everything. A chance for her to make something of herself. A chance to experience new things, to meet new people. It was a place where you could be somebody but also a place where you could disappear into the mass of people. She appreciated both aspects. Plus it also had the best part of Hawkins. Jonathan. She at Columbia School of Journalism. He at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Them together in a cramped Brooklyn apartment. So really she was all set in the big city. An opportunity to fulfill her ambitions. And Jonathan by her side all the while.

Freshman year had been challenging, but in a good way. School wasn't easy but it wasn't supposed to be easy. But it was also fun, rewarding and enlightening. She loved it. And once or twice when she was close to having a breakdown over the stress of studies Jonathan was there to catch her falling, like always. He'd hold her, make her relax and unwind, and then remind her that she was smart and, in his words "an unstoppable force of nature who can do absolutely anything you put your mind to". That sort of stuff really helps. And she of course did the same for him when he was on the brink of sanity whilst finishing up a big assignment.

Don't go to New York just for the sake of a boy, her dad had said. She had rolled her eyes and explained to him, slowly, since he clearly didn't get it and at that point still thought his little princess would go

to IU or Northwestern or whatever. She was going to Columbia regardless, for *her*. Because that's what she wanted to do. What she didn't say, because her dad would surely never understand that, was that though it was true that she wanted to go to Columbia, she also didn't find any fault with her and Jonathan going together, wherever. Yes Columbia was her future. But her and Jonathan was the present *and* the future. Luckily their dreams independent of each other lined up perfectly with each other, because maybe they were just awesome like that.

So two weeks in, she was still riding high on her wave of excitement for the new semester, she knew it would get grueling later but right now she was just pumped for her second year. She was quite content with life at the moment. And right at this specific moment she was squeezed into a diner booth, Jonathan on her right with an arm around her as always, Julie to her left and Ricky, Lola and Kristen across from her. It was Friday afternoon, school was done for the week and they've all gone to a late lunch to celebrate with some of their friends. Julie was her classmate, they had become fast friends during freshman year. Ricky was in Jonathan's class at Tisch and they'd met Lola at a rally, and Kristen through her.

"Hey, you alright," she asks, nudging Jonathan in the side.

"What? Yeah, sorry, just tired," he answers. She's not fully satisfied by that answer, but won't push it now.

"You've been tired a lot lately," Ricky notes.

"Nancy keeping you up at night?" Lola teases, waggling her eyebrows at them.

"Ha-ha," she mock-laughs while the others snicker and Jonathan yawns. The thing is Ricky is right, he has been tired a lot lately. Jonathan thinks he's just getting sick, and he's probably right, but damn his taking his sweet time about in that case. And he's usually not like this. Usually a cold hits him like a ton of bricks and then he's fine after a day or two. Okay, usually he catches the cold from her.

They continue to chit-chat while finishing lunch, though Jonathan is quiet. That's another thing, he's really come out of his shell in New York, but the tiredness makes him as quiet as he was back in Hawkins. Hm.

"You guys going out later?" Kristen asks as they start to get up out of the booth to leave.

"We'll see, first we're going home so I can forcefeed him vitamins or make him go to a doctor," she says while stepping out so Jonathan can get out.

"Nance, I'm fine," he insists.

"Do you want me to call your mom? You know I will," she low-key threatens.

"I know. I'm fi-

Jonathan gets out of the booth and stands up. And promptly drops to the ground mid-sentence.

"Jonathan!"

She immediately drops to her knees and takes his head in her hands. He's passed out. She can feel his pulse though. She places his head in her lap to get it off the dirty floor. She tries not to panic and fails spectacularly at it.

"Jonathan!" She repeats, patting his cheek. No response. It freaks her out. She can feel herself panic. Last time she felt this upset and scared she was in another dimension. That he saved her from. He pulled her back, he held her in his arms and the panic slowly settled. Now she holds him in her arms and can only feel the panic rising as he continues to be unresponsive. She tries to collect herself enough to think straight. She's vaguely aware of Julie, Kristen and Ricky crouching down, saying something. She can hear Lola shouting at the guy behind the counter to call an ambulance.

"What should we do?"

"We should put his feet up!"

"Wait did we hit his head?"

"Should we move him?"

"Not if he hit his head."

"But did he?"

"I don't think so."

"What should we-"

She can barely focus on the others who are all talking at once, trying to help. She just holds Jonathan and tries to get through to him. Ricky does put Jonathan's feet up eventually and she's aware of Lola dropping to her knees beside her saying that the ambulance is on its way.

Suddenly his eyes flutter open.

"Jonathan!" She calls out, staring down into his half-open eyes, his gaze searching.

"Wha-" He begins but trails off. He blinks several times.

"Jonathan stay with me," she tries but his eyes close again. His breathing remains steady though. "Jonathan!"

He goes in and out quickly like that two more times. She has no idea how much time has passed but suddenly there's EMT's there next to her, looking over Jonathan and talking to her. She can't quite hear what they're saying until someone gently puts a hand on her shoulder which makes her look up from Jonathan. A friendly face of one of the EMT's looks at her.

"Hey, just breathe, everything's going to be alright. My name is Gary,

what's your name?"

"N-Nancy."

"Hello Nancy, and this is...?"

"Jonathan."

"Can you tell me what happened? He just passed out?"

"Yes, we were getting up to leave, he just fell."

"Has he been out since then?"

"He came to two... three times but passed right out again."

"Has it ever happened before, has he passed out before?"

"No, never."

"Any medical conditions?"

"No."

"None at all?"

"No, he's just been more tired lately but nothing... serio- we didn't think it was anything serious, oh my god I-"

"Hey, it's okay, just stay calm. I know it's scary but it's probably nothing, okay? His breathing looks good, he's had a pulse the whole time, right? That's good. Probably just low blood pressure or something, okay?"

She swallows hard and nods, before glancing down at Jonathan again who's meanwhile been examined by the other EMT. She tries to read that guy's expression, which proves hard to do.

"Okay Nancy, we're going to move him onto the gurney now, you're doing great holding his head stable so just keep doing that and we'll move him okay?"

She nods and continues to hold Jonathan while they move him onto

the gurney. She follows as they quickly roll the gurney out the door and jumps in after as they load him into the back of the ambulance. Gary gets in the back too while the other guy runs around to the driver's seat. The last thing she sees before the doors close is her friends standing there looking on worried.

She sits by Jonathan's head, stroking his hair while Gary checks different things and the ambulance carrying them speeds down the street.

"Any allergies?"

"N-no."

"Okay. Just stay calm, he's doing great, you're doing great."

"O-okay."

"You two been together long?" Gary asks, continuing with small talk to calm her while he keeps checking on Jonathan.

"Since high school."

"That's nice. How old are you?"

"19."

"Where are you from?"

"Indiana."

"Here for college?"

"Yeah."

"What are you studying?"

"Journalism... him photography."

"Cool."

Jonathan stirs and his eyes flutter open again.

"N-nance?" He gets out in a weak voice, staring up at her, trying to fix his gaze.

"I'm here Jonathan, I'm here," she replies, grasping one of his hands in a tight grip.

"Hey buddy, you're doing great. Just focus on breathing," Gary tells him but Jonathan is already out again. She keeps his hand in hers.

They get to the hospital and she keeps Jonathan's hand in hers, running alongside the gurney while they're rushing through hallways and tries to understand what the EMT's and doctors are saying to each other because no one will tell her anything. They run and run and run until suddenly they reach a point where she for some reason can't go with them and she's forced to let go of him after pressing a chaste kiss to his knuckles. She feels completely lost for a moment, without Jonathan in her hands, without him in sight even. She looks around and doesn't know what to do. A nurse comes up to her and gently leads her to the waiting room to sit down.

"They have to do some testing, it might be a while but just stay calm, as long as he's breathing and all it's fine."

She tries to nod, she's not sure if she actually succeeds in doing it.

"Just sit down and try to relax. We have some forms you can fill out meanwhile."

She fills out all the info about Jonathan the forms asks for. Just when she's done that and handed it over to the nurse who takes it away she hears familiar voices. Julie, Lola, Kristen and Ricky have rushed in through the entrance and up to her.

"What's happened, how is he?"

"I don't know... they're doing... tests. I don't know."

They all look at each other. Julie sits down next to her and puts a hand on her arm, the others follow suit, sitting down around them.

"I'm sure he's fine. It didn't get worse in the ambulance, right?"

"N-no, it was... more of the same, I guess."

"It's going to be fine, I bet it's just the flu or something."

"Or low blood sugar or something," Ricky suggests.

"It's going to be fine," Kristen adds.

She nods, unconvinced but appreciative of the support. Then she realizes something.

"Oh, shit."

"What?" Lola asks.

"I have to... I have to call his mom... oh she's going to be so worried this is... oh this is going to suck."

Julie pats her arm again. She takes a breath and gets up and walks over to the phone.

"Byers," it's Joyce who answers. Thank God, she's not sure what she would've done if it had been Will, she wouldn't have been able to hide the fear in her voice and Will would've picked up on it and demanded to know what was wrong and she's not sure how she'd be able to tell him. Not that Joyce will be much easier.

"H-hi, Joyce. It's Nancy," she greets, trying to keep her voice steady.

"Nancy!" Joyce cheerily greets but then goes quiet, immediately picking up on her tone. "What's wrong, Sweetie?"

"It's..." She has to take a breath before continuing. "It's Jonathan..."

"What? What about Jonathan?" Joyce urgently asks.

"He's in the hospital, he passed out."

"What?!"

"He passed out," she repeats.

"What happened? What... is he...okay?"

"I don't know I... he, he passed out just... now, this afternoon. He... he was sort of in and out, he was breathing all the time. But I... we're at the hospital now and they're doing some tests and they wouldn't let me be there for that and it's taking forever and I- I'm worried and scared and I just..." She trails off.

"Oh my God... I, we... we're coming, right now. Thanks for calling Sweetie, just stay calm. We're coming as fast as we can. Which hospital?"

She sits down again next to Julie, curling up with her feet onto the chair, drawing her knees up towards her chest, wiping at her eyes and almost giving herself a hug while trying not to cry. No one says anything for a while because what's there to say? She asks Julie the time. Then either she loses the concept of time or time loses her because the next time she asks when nothing has happened for what must be hours it's only been five minutes according to Julie. She asks again later and it's the same thing. Time does pass, but slowly. Finally a nurse comes by.

"Jonathan Byers?"

"Yes! I mean, uh, yes I'm... he's with me. What's going on?"

"Well, we don't know yet, so they have to run more tests."

"What kind of tests?"

"Oh, different ones. They have to be thorough, don't worry. It's standard procedure."

"Is he awake?"

"Not for the moment, it's best for the testing, so. Don't worry, his breathing is stable same as it was before and his pulse is fine. Now... you were the girlfriend, was that right?"

"Yes."

"Okay. Is there any family I should call?"

"I've already... I've already called. They're on their way here. From Indiana."

"Oh, okay. That's good. I'll let you know first thing there's any news, but it might be awhile so sit tight."

"Okay."

A while is an eternity, it seems like. They wait, wait and wait. And the longer they wait the more anxious she gets because surely that must mean it's something bad? If it was just low blood... whatever or the flu or something they would've told her by now. But no one says anything. She can't lose Jonathan.

Joyce is a force of nature so she's not surprised when she bursts through the entrance doors with Will in tow in what she'd later

realize was a frankly inhumanly quick time considering they came from Indiana. She stands up, tentatively wrapping her arms around herself, hugging herself again, looking at the other woman worriedly. Joyce sees her, runs over and hugs her tight. She wraps her arms around her in turn.

"Any news?" Joyce asks softly.

"No... they're just doing tests... no one's told me anything more..." She answers and lets out a few quiet sobs into Joyce's neck. Joyce hugs her closer.

Eventually they let go of each other and she wipes at her eyes again. She sees Will standing around awkwardly, looking just as worried as her.

"Hi, Will," she greets softly.

"Hey Nancy," he answers, offering a weak smile. Joyce and Will glance around at the others sitting around watching the whole interaction in awkward silence.

"Oh, uh, these are our friends, uh, Julie, Lola, Ricky, Kristen," she quickly introduces, gesturing around while they all give awkward small waves. "We were all having lunch when uh, when it happened."

"Oh, hi guys," Joyce gives a small wave back.

"Sorry to meet like this, Mrs. Byers," Ricky offers and the others nod. Julie and Lola move over to sit by Ricky and Kristen so Joyce and Will can sit next to her.

More waiting. She fidgets, doesn't know what to do with her hands until Joyce takes one and holds it. They stay like that. There's no words. Finally the nurse returns, with a doctor in tow. They leap to their feet.

"Hi I'm Dr. Verbeek."

"Is he... what?" Joyce asks urgently.

"He's stable. We've run some tests..." Dr. Verbeek answers and hesitates, glancing around at their group. "If the family could come with me, we need to talk."

She and Joyce both nod. She turns to her friends.

"You guys should go home, or go eat. Thanks for being here."

"Sure?" Julie asks.

"Yeah, thanks. We'll talk."

"Okay, take care of yourself. Let us know... what's up," Julie answers before hugging her.

"Family?" The doctor wonders when she follows Joyce and Will in following him.

"Yes," Joyce answers for her.

"Alright, my apologies," Dr. Verbeek says.

They follow Dr. Verbeek through hallways into an office. He sits down behind the desk. There's two more chairs so she stands while Joyce and Will sit down.

"So, we've done a lot of tests, it took us a while to find what was wrong with Jonathan. We at first couldn't find a reason for him fainting today, but you said he had been feeling tired for a longer time?"

"Yes."

"That gave us an inkling and so we did some more scans. Of his kidneys."

Dr. Verbeek pulls out an x-ray image and starts to explain. She doesn't understand it all, there's a lot of words and she can't focus like she wants to, but she gets the gist of it. The words "kidneys", "aggravated", and "serious" are said enough times to let her know the gravity of the situation.

"What are the... options?" Joyce asks when Dr. Verbeek is done explaining the condition.

"There are several treatment options when it comes to these sort of things, but given the seriousness of Jonathan's conditions, and that it's been festering in him for quite some time... we can medicate it but it would only delay the inevitable which is that he will need a transplant. Both kidneys are affected but the left one not so bad, that one can be managed it with medication etc, but the right one needs to be removed and the left one isn't good enough on it's own, he needs one healthy kidney."

"Okay... so transplant that is... well that is that then? So that needs to happen."

"Yes. Now, we will put him on the donor list of course but it's a long list so he will have to wait, possibly for a long time on there. However, if you'd be willing we could test if you are a possibility as a donor for him, if you-"

"Yes do that now!" Joyce cuts him off.

"Alright. Now, it's not a hundred percent certain that you'll be a match, there's several factors that come into play. Biologically, the likelihood is also greater, since they share more DNA, that a brother would be a match..."

"Yes," Will says just as quickly as Joyce. "Do me too, for the test."

Joyce strokes his hair and nods.

"Alright, we'll get to it right away."

"Can I see him?" She asks while Dr. Verbeek leads Joyce and Will down the hallway to do whatever needs to be done to see if either of them could be a suitable donor.

"Sure. Ruth, would you show her the way please," he asks an older nurse close by.

"Of course. Come with me, Sweetheart," the nurse offers a warm smile and beckons.

"We'll come over once we're done," Joyce tells her while she quickly follows Ruth.

He's sleeping, connected to an IV. She pulls up a chair and sits down by the bed, taking Jonathan's left hand in both of hers. He looks... so tired. How couldn't she notice that something was wrong? More wrong than just a cold, or the flu? She turns his hand up and looks at the scar across his palm. Runs her fingers over it and relives three intense years in five seconds. Everything they've gone through. Everything they've done. The two of them, together. Always. They're a team. She grasps his hand again, lining up their scars and presses a kiss to his knuckles. Together, through everything. He'd do anything for her. He *has* done everything for her. She'll do anything for him.

She's not sure for how long she sits like that, running through the last few weeks in her head over and over, running through every possible scenario for the future she can conceive. Eventually the door opens and Joyce steps inside, followed by Will. Joyce lets out a small gasp at the sight of her eldest son in a hospital bed. The thought hits Nancy that Joyce had to get used to the sight of Will in a hospital bed years earlier. And now this. With Jonathan, who she knows was always the rock for Joyce to lean against. In situations like this. Now he's the one in the bed.

Joyce and Will pulls up chairs too and sit down next to her. No one really says anything, there's not much to say just a lot of time to wait. She looks down at their scarred hands again.

"I'm sorry," she says quietly.

"What? For what, Sweetheart?" Joyce asks.

"I should have... done more, I told him he should go to the doctors but, I should have done more I should have noticed... he wasn't himself, I should have known it was more than a cold or the flu... We look out for each other, he takes care of me I'm supposed to take care of him... I'm sorry I-"

"Sweetheart it's not your fault. You noticed. You told him. You couldn't know it was this."

"But I-"

"And you take care of him. You're so good for him. You're so good together. This isn't your fault. And we'll get through this. We've gotten through tougher spots before."

They're all quiet for a second, contemplating.

"He had to grow up so fast," Joyce starts then. "Too fast. I feel bad. He never got the chance to be a normal kid, a normal teen, he had to be so grownup so young. I... needed him to. I leaned on him. He took care of me as much as I took care of him. And with Lonnie and all that. He endured so much, carried so much. With work, and Will I... I didn't care enough for him... there was never... time or-"

"Yes you did, you took care of him," Will says.

"I don't know... maybe it's never enough, you feel... with you too Will I... there's so much I feel like..."

"You're the best mom ever. You did anything and everything for us. Literally," Will says with conviction. And if that isn't the truest statement ever, she don't know what is.

"You raised the greatest boys... men, Joyce. The best. You did that," she adds.

Joyce slowly nods.

Suddenly Jonathan stirs a little and his eyes blink open. She's still clutching his hand in hers. They all lean in toward him.

"N-nance?" He says softly, weakly, as his eyes peer open, searching.

"I'm here Jonathan, I'm here," she hurries to say, squeezing his hand as his gaze falls on her.

"W-where are we?"

"We're in the hospital. How are you feeling?"

"T-the hospital? Are you okay?" His tired voice gets a hint of urgency about it. He's a bit woozy but still his normal self. Always thinking of her first. It even makes her smile a little bit, it's just so typical of him.

"Yes, I'm fine. How do you feel, Jonathan? It's you we're looking after now."

"I'm tired," he says and looks about ready to fall asleep again.

"I know baby. Just rest, everything's going to be fine. Your mom and Will is here."

"Hey sweetheart," Joyce pipes in, resting a hand on his knee.

"Hey Jonathan," Will says.

His gaze travels to look at them.

"Hey mom, hey Will. You okay? Hospital is no fun."

"We're fine, Jonathan. Just rest, sweetie. It's all going to be fine. We'll be here with you."

"Hm... Nance... you sure you're okay?"

"Yes, silly," she can't help but roll her eyes. "Listen to your mom. Just rest, we'll be here."

"Okay..."

He falls back asleep. After an eternity Dr. Verbeek comes into the room looking very serious like a doctor does, she supposes.

"So we've got results from your tests," he begins. "If you'd like to follow me into my office..."

"Just please tell us now Doc," Joyce pleads. "Give it to us straight."

"Alright," Dr. Verbeek answers and pulls out a chair for himself. "First off, Joyce. I'm sorry, but having reviewed the results we've reached the conclusion that you're not a suitable donor. You match the criteria to an extent but there's a number of factors that come into play as said, and mainly the issue of Jonathan's body rejecting the kidney after a transplant, the results tells us that the chance of that happening is far too large with yours. I'm sorry."

"O-okay," Joyce swallows hard and nods.

"What about me?" Will asks.

"Will, you... well, you are technically a better match but... given your medical history, your body won't be able to handle the pressure that the procedure and recovery would put on it. Therefore, we can't let you..."

"No! But- I... he'd do it for me! He's done so much for me! I have to- I *need* to do this for him! He needs it!" Will's voice is more agitated than she's ever heard it. Joyce reaches out and rubs her youngest son's back.

"Will, sweetie, we can't..."

"But I-" Will tries to start again but cuts himself off, choking on his words as he glances to his older brother in the hospital bed.

"Well... what about me?" She pipes up. The room falls silent and all eyes on her.

"You? Uh, well the chance that you're a sufficient match is-" Dr. Verbeek starts.

"Is it zero?" She cuts him off.

"No..."

"Then do the test thing with me."

Dr. Verbeek quiets and looks at Joyce.

"Nancy, sweetie, are you sure? You don't have to do this..."

"I know but I want to. I need to. He needs this," she says firmly. "Test me," she turns to Dr. Verbeek again.

Joyce nods. Dr. Verbeek nods.

"Well uh, we can go do it right away then."

"Good."

She looks at Jonathan. Looks down at his hand in hers. Presses a kiss to his knuckles before getting up. There's no time to waste.

"You're a good match."

The words are barely out of Dr. Verbeek's mouth before she's up out of her seat and Joyce lets out a noise that she can't quite describe but is kind of like a sigh of relief.

"Yes! Let's do it now then," she says right away. This needs to get done now. Jonathan has to get better.

"Um, it's not quite that simple. Perhaps you should allow yourself to think this over since it's a big decision that will impact your life in—"

"I've thought it over. Jonathan needs a kidney. I've got two, I'm a good match, you just said. So he'll get one of mine. That's what needs to happen. What else is there to it?"

"Nancy, you're sure about this? I don't want you to feel..." Joyce starts.

"I'm sure. Hundred percent," she answers and finishes with a firm nod. Joyce holds her gaze and then nods in turn before pulling her into a hug.

"Thank you."

"If you are sure... he needs a transplant very soon. And we do have an opening in surgery tomorrow..."

"Yes. Do it. As soon as possible."

"If you're sure. There's no one you'd like to discuss it with? It's a major life decision."

She looks to Jonathan's sleeping form. Him. That's who she talks to about major life decisions. But this is hers to make.

"I'm sure."

Forms. "Are you sure?" More forms. "No I don't want to talk to my parents right now." More forms. "When was the last time you ate?" Doctors talking to her. Trying to rest. Failing to rest. More doctor talk. It's all a blur to her, from the moment she made her mind up to the moment it's time. When something is wrong she wants to fix it right away. Or make it better, as best she can. It was like that when

Barb disappeared. When she had to give Barb's parents some sort of peace of mind. When monsters invaded their world. But nothing is as wrong as Jonathan in a hospital bed. So she's really desperate to fix that. When they're ready to roll her into surgery all she can think is *finally*.

Joyce and Will appear by her side. They've already rolled Jonathan into the operating room.

"Sweetheart. I... this means the world to me. You... you've already done so much... more than... more than anyone can ever..." Joyce trails off, glancing from her to Will and her mind seems to be both here in the moment and in a cabin several years back.

"It's what anyone of us would do... this is just how it has to go," she shrugs and smiles softly. Joyce nods.

"Thank you."

"Thank you."

"You're awesome," Will says.

"You too," she smiles.

"We'll be here when you wake up," Joyce says and she nods.

He feels very confused when he wakes up. He's not sure where he is. Think Byers, think. What do you remember? Turning in the assignment to Mr. Clemmensen. Hm. Diner. Ordering a turkey sandwich. Nancy talking. Other people there too. Where's Nancy? Where is he? He opens his eyes again. The light is bright. Yep no definitely not sure where he is. Does look like a... wait. Nancy. Her

face above his. Her gentle smile. She told him something. Hospital. Yes. And it was... him. Who was in hospital. Hm.

"Sweetie! You're awake!"

His mom is next to him. And Will stands by her. He can't quite decipher the looks on their faces. Where's his camera? If he could take a photo he might be able to later.

"H-hey."

"Hi! How are you feeling?"

"W-where's Nancy? Am I in... hospital?"

"Yes sweetie. It's alright. How do you feel?"

"Tired. Why am I here? Where's Nancy?"

"You passed out. You've been ill. Your kidneys."

"Oh?"

Now that she mentions it, he hasn't been feeling well. He's starting to feel more lucid.

"My kidneys?"

"Yes, you've been sick for a while. It was pretty bad. They had to take a sick kidney out and put a new one in."

"What? When did that happen? Where's Nancy?"

"Just now, sweetie," his mom smiles at him. "It's to make you feel better."

"Right."

That's a lot to process, but he feels like he can think more clearly now.

"When did I pass out?"

"Yesterday."

"When did you get here?"

"Yesterday."

"I have a new kidney?"

"Yes."

"How did I get a new kidney? And where is Nancy?"

"Where do you think?" His mom smiles and points to the side.

He slowly turns his head to the left. His whole body feels sore.

There she is. She's sleeping. In a hospital gown just like he himself is dressed in, he now notices. Head tucked to his side. Peaceful features on her delicate face. More comes back to him. She said she was fine, he definitely remembers her saying she was fine. But if she's in hospital clothes and a bed she's not... why would she lie they don't lie to each other... why is she in- oh. Oh.

"You needed a new kidney, fast. I wanted to give you mine..." His mom starts.

"Same here," Will adds.

"But it wouldn't work out. But you two were a perfect match."

"I have Nancy's..."

"Yes."

"She gave me her..."

"Yes. She didn't hesitate. At all."

The door is opened and someone he don't know steps in wearing a white robe so he assumes it's a doctor. A woman wearing scrubs follows.

"Hello Jonathan, I'm Dr. Verbeek, this is Nurse Paula, How do you feel?"

"How is Nancy?" He demands to know.

"She's fine. How are you feeling, Jonathan?"

"Fine, but how is Nancy? You sure she's okay?"

"I'm sure. That's good that you feel better, you gave us quite the scare," the doctor continues while reading from a clipboard and looking at a machine he now realizes he's hooked up to. "I'm sure you have a lot of questions-"

"You're sure Nancy is alright?"

The doctor looks at him quizzically, for a second he thinks he can spy a faint smile at the corner of the doctor's lips. The doctor glances to his mom, who he out of the corner of his eye can see smiling and shrugging.

"I am sure."

"Can you check again please?"

"I will in a moment but right now we need to know that you are-"

"I am fine can you please check on Nancy?"

The doctor glances to his mom again, who he now definitely sees mouthing something to the doctor.

"Okay, I'll check."

The doctor goes over to Nancy's bed and picks up the clipboard hanging off the end of the bed. He reads it, then looks at the machine beside her bed. Then looks at her. Looks at the machine again. At the clipboard again. Nods and then puts the clipboard down and walks back to his bed.

"She's doing fine, all her vitals look good. She's good. She's strong."

"Duh," he can't help but shake his head. Hello Captain Obvious, she's the strongest person in the world. Wait did Will just giggle?

"Yes. Can I check on you now?" The doctor asks.

"Okay."

The doctor has just finished examining him and is on his way out of the room when Nancy stirring awake catches everyone's attention. Her eyes flutter open and she blinks several times. She looks right at him. He hasn't been able to take his eyes off of her since he first turned his head towards her.

"H-hey," she says. Her voice is soft. It's always soft. Except for when she's telling a monster or a government agent to go to hell. But it's extra-soft now.

"Hey," he mirrors.

She looks at him for a long moment, studying him intently.

"Are you okay?" She finally says.

"Yes."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

"Hello again Nancy. He's fine, I just checked," Dr. Verbeek cuts in with a small smile. "How are you feeling?"

"Okay."

"Good. I just checked your vitals too. It's looking good. You two just rest and I'll check back in with you later."

Dr. Verbeek leaves. Nurse Paula stays.

"Like the doctor said, you two need to rest. Are you comfortable?" She asks.

"No," Nancy says and shakes her head.

"Okay sweetie, tell me what you need, another pillow?"

"No I need," she slowly raises her right hand and points towards him.

"I want... I don't want to be over here. Can I be there? Can we push... the beds or something I need to..." Nancy's trying, and failing, to sit up and somehow move the bed by her own accord. Nurse Paula hurries over.

"Okay okay sweetie, sure, we can do that just take it easy. Will?"

His brother immediately goes over to help Paula roll Nancy's bed towards him. When they're side by side Paula folds down the railings on the two beds so they together form a sort of double in a way.

"Better?" Paula asks.

"Yes, thank you," Nancy quietly answers before reaching out to grab his hand. He meets her halfway. Finally. Her touch. It's everything. "Hey," she whispers.

"Hey," he mirrors.

His mom actually takes the hint so she and Will follow Paula out of the room.

"You scared me."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be. How do you feel?"

"Sore. Tired. You?"

"Same," she answers, eyebrows knitting together like they do when she's thinking. "I was so scared. For you..."

"I'm sorry," he says again before he can stop himself. She gives him a look. Strokes his hand with her thumb.

"I love you."

"I love you."

She inches a bit closer to him.

"You gave me a piece of your body," he states a fact.

"You needed it," she replies.

"Thank you."

"No problem."

"You're amazing," he states another fact.

"So are you."

She's tracing the faded scar on his palm with her fingers. He realizes they'll have new matching ones now on their respective abdomen.

"We match even more now," she says with lightness to her voice, apparently thinking of just the same thing.

"Wonder who's is bigger," he jokes, recalling a conversation years ago in a motel room many miles away.

A light chuckle escapes her lips. A sound that he's sure speeds up his recovery. He scoots closer to her. She closer to him. She fills him in on everything. What happened at the diner. At the hospital. How worried his mom was. How worried she was. How upset Will was when he couldn't donate.

When Nurse Paula later returns with his mom and Will in tow Nancy ropes her into helping her adjust herself and her pillows further so she's lying right close to him, close enough to rest her head on his shoulder. When Dr. Verbeek returns he raises an eyebrow but doesn't comment, instead going into talking about how it looks good, that the operation went good and that they're bodies seem to be responding good in post-op, but that they have to keep monitoring the situation close.

"We will keep you both here for at least few days, possibly more for you Jonathan depending on how your body reacts to the new kidney. We will know more in a couple of days and hopefully be able to release you, but bare in mind, the body may reject the new kidney later to, up to at least 60 days after surgery it may happen. So even after release you will need to be vigilant of how you feel."

He nods. Nancy looks at him.

"You better not reject my kidney," she huffs.

"Wouldn't dream of it," he grins.

Dr. Verbeek leaves. His mom asks how they feel in eight different ways before she briefly leaves to go to the bathroom.

"Will," he calls his brother, who's mostly been standing quiet and watching, over.

"Yes, do you need anything are you feeling okay is anything-" He's almost as hyper as their mom, it makes him smile.

"Relax Will, I'm fine. It's all good. I just wanted to say thanks. For being here. For me, and for mom."

"And for me," Nancy adds in a tired voice.

"I... I didn't... I just..."

"You're here Will, you're a rock."

"I'm sorry I couldn't... I wanted to be there for you, when you needed it. Like you've always been for me."

"Hey. You're always here for me. You're here now. You've always done everything you can."

Slowly, Will nods.

"Do you guys need anything? Anything at all?"

"I'm good, I think we just need some rest now. But... take care of mom? Make sure she doesn't stress out. Get some sleep. And you too."

Will nods again and says good night before exiting.

"Night."

Nancy looks at him. She's about to fall asleep, he can tell. He feels like he'll follow her into it any minute.

"Night."

She closes her eyes. Keeps his hand in hers.

The next morning he feels better. Still really sore but not quite as much. Not as tired. And Nancy feels better. That makes him feel *much* better. The doctor uses ultrasound to check on his kidneys and says it looks good, which brightens everyone's mood. As soon as the doctor is finished examining him Nancy repositions herself, cuddling into his side, wordlessly asking him if he's comfortable. He nods, asks the same with his eyes. She smiles and nods. Breakfast is brought in on two trays, they sit up a bit more, still nestled together. His mom and Will sit next to the bed.

"Will, could you maybe do me a favor?" Nancy asks while pushing the last spoonful of her Jell-O in between her lips.

"Sure, Nancy! Anything," his brother eagerly answers.

"Could you maybe call Mike and tell him about uh... everything? If

you want, I mean.”

”He doesn’t know?” He whips his head around to look at her.

”No,” she says while taking a sip of her orange juice.

”Your parents?”

”No,” she answers while popping a grape into her mouth. ”It would have just been a lot of pointless talking. And they’d just be worried. Better to just do it and tell them after, when they can’t argue. What’s done is done and I wouldn’t change it for the world. And my mind was made up anyway so,” she says matter-of-factly.

”Alright,” is all he can say. Hard to argue with that.

”Yeah, I’ll call. I’ll tell him to tell your parents.”

”Thanks a lot,” Nancy smiles at Will, picks up the cracker her tray offers and takes a bite. Frowns. ”Yuck,” is her verdict and she resolves to put the rest of it on his tray. Her eyes catches sight of his Jell-O and she snags it.

”Hey! That’s my Jell-O,” he protests.

”I gave you my kidney,” she tries with her best puppy-eyes.

”How often will you use that?” He smirks. She sticks her tongue out at him. It’s tinted green by the Jell-O she’s already consumed.

”How ’bout Jell-O for kidney, rest of my cracker AND my yoghurt?” She offers.

”Throw in a couple of grapes and you’ve got yourself a deal,” he negotiates.

The transaction is made, he gets another yoghurt cup and more grapes on his tray and a very pleased Jell-O obsessed girlfriend leaning back into him.

Will makes the call and relays that Mike was ”as shocked as when Dustin said Return of the Jedi was better than The Empire Strikes

Back". After breakfast they rest some more. Plays "I spy" for way too long. In the afternoon they have visitors. Julie, Lola, Kristen and Ricky, who are shocked to say the least when they learn of what happened since they last saw them.

Which is nothing to say of her parents reaction of course. When her family bounds in during the evening it's *a lot* of talking and explaining and re-explaining until all parties are satisfied. The issue for the Wheeler's seems to be with Nancy not telling them beforehand but after she's said that her mind was made up for the fourteenth time they seem to come to terms with it. They're tired and visiting hours are then soon over so they get going, but Mike lingers.

"Thanks for dropping that grenade in my lap, by the way," he says, voice dripping with sarcasm and Jonathan tries to picture the conversation Mike must have had with his parents, telling them that their eldest daughter apparently just donated a kidney.

"Whatever do you mean?" Nancy teasingly replies.

"Weirdest conversation of my life..." Mike mutters. Clears his throat. "But uh... you're uh, doing good? Both of you?"

"Yeah."

"Good. Good. That's cool... see you tomorrow," he awkwardly parts with.

They stay in the hospital a few more days. Nancy manages to negotiate their Jell-O rations so they get enough for both of them. Their bodies recover. The new scars seem to be pretty equal in size. Skilled surgeon, he supposes.

It's summer. Life is good. He's laying on the grass in Central Park. His head in her lap. She's sitting with her back against a tree trunk and combs through his hair with her fingers. It's soothing. It's bliss. She smiles down at him. He peers up at her. Backlit by the sun shimmering down through the treetop. Big beautiful eyes looking down at him. He could stay like this forever. With her. He could do anything, with her.

"Hi," she says softly.

"Hey," he beams up at her.